

2018

St. Marys Senior Task Force

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[SENIOR TASK FORCE REPORT]

This report provides findings, recommendations, and options for the City of St. Marys Mayor and City Council to consider during their deliberations and decisions regarding the future of St. Marys Senior Center and Senior Advisory Committee.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 4, 2017, at a regularly scheduled St. Marys City Council meeting, the Council formed a Senior Task Force to (1) "...conduct research necessary to formulate recommendations and options for Council to consider in reaching an appropriate resolution to the request by the Senior Advisory Committee to dissolve"; and (2) in accordance with the City's Master Plan "Update and modernize programming at the Senior Center to significantly increase the number of seniors served daily."

During initial research and discussions, the Senior Task Force determined that recommendations and options should be designed to result in a senior center that offers participating seniors an environment, programs, and activities that benefit physical and mental health, increases opportunities to learn new things, find out about and connect to support services, and have a positive effect on overall quality of life. Once an option is selected and implemented, the results are expected to improve diversification of opportunities for our seniors, demonstrate the value of a community senior center, and encourage more seniors to participate.

Based on the information assembled and developed in this report, it is recommended that the Mayor and City Council: (1) accept the recommendation that the Senior Advisory Committee be dissolved; and (2) select one of four options in order to move forward with desired senior services. These options are not listed in any order of priority. Sequential numbers are used only to facilitate connecting specific information with specific options.

Option 1: Revitalize St. Marys Senior Center

Option 2: Transfer the responsibilities and operations of St. Marys Senior Center to St. Marys Hospital Authority (dba Senior Authority)

Option 3: Outsource the full operation of St. Marys Senior Center to Camden County Personal Services Administration (PSA) Leisure Services

Option 4: Close St. Marys Senior Center and encourage St. Marys seniors to use Camden County Senior Center in Woodbine, Georgia.

Equally important to the choice made by the Mayor and City Council is the need to redress inconsistent and conflicting expectations, standards, and protocols surrounding senior center activities. The correction of these contrary conditions (actual or perceived) through the fostering of unambiguous and comprehensive documents and communications is necessary to accomplish the end goal of providing responsive and well attended senior activities in an all-inclusive, friendly and welcoming environment.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND and PURPOSE

On November 28, 2017, Councilman Rassi requested that the St. Marys City Council appoint a volunteer Senior Task Force to provide recommendations and options for the Council to consider in reaching a decision regarding the request by the Senior Advisory Committee to dissolve. At a City Council meeting December 4, 2017, the City Council unanimously approved this request, appointed five volunteers to form the Senior Task Force, and extended the assignment to include the “High” priority and “Immediate” action defined in the City’s Master Planⁱ to “update and modernize programming at the Senior Center to significantly increase the number of seniors served daily”.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the tasks assigned, the Senior Task Force collected and analyzed information and data gathered from City and Senior Center records and reports. In addition, the Senior Task Force conducted interviews, meetings, research, and outreach to eligible seniors and leaders in the field that support and manage senior centers.

For example, the Senior Task Force met with and collected information from: (1) Senior Center and City staff; (2) seniors who currently use the Senior Center and seniors who do not participate but are eligible to do so; (3) Camden County Personal Services Administration (PSA) Leisure Services Director and staff who manage the County Senior Center in Woodbine; and (4) District 12 Regional Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Director and managers. In addition, internet research was used to consider and assimilate a national view and examples of successful senior centers and programs.

Finally, the Senior Task Force chose to collect and analyze FY 2017 financial data, the last completed fiscal year, to develop a snapshot of Senior Center labor, operations, and maintenance costs. In addition, CY 2014 through CY 2017 and FY 2017 attendance and program records were reviewed and analyzed to develop an understanding of attendance cycles and program objectives, variety, and trends.

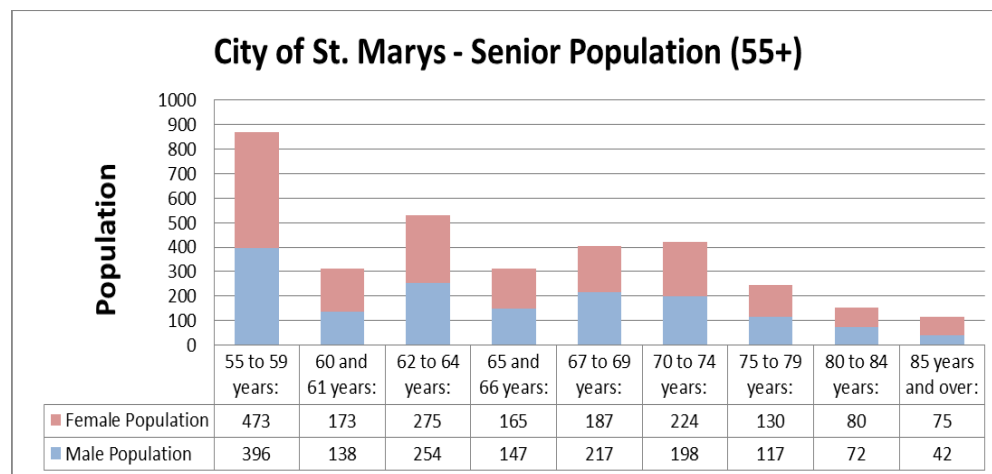
A concise report of identified needs, findings, recommendations, options and conclusions are provided in the body of this report. Details and supporting information are provided in the Appendices. Findings that are the result of data collection and calculations are provided in labeled charts and supporting tables.

NEEDS ASSESMENT

Not all needs identified during this study are applicable to each of the four options offered for consideration and choice. However, the following general needs are applicable to all four options. Where there is an option-specific need, it is documented in conjunction with the applicable “Option” description and definition. The general (ubiquitous) needs are as follows:

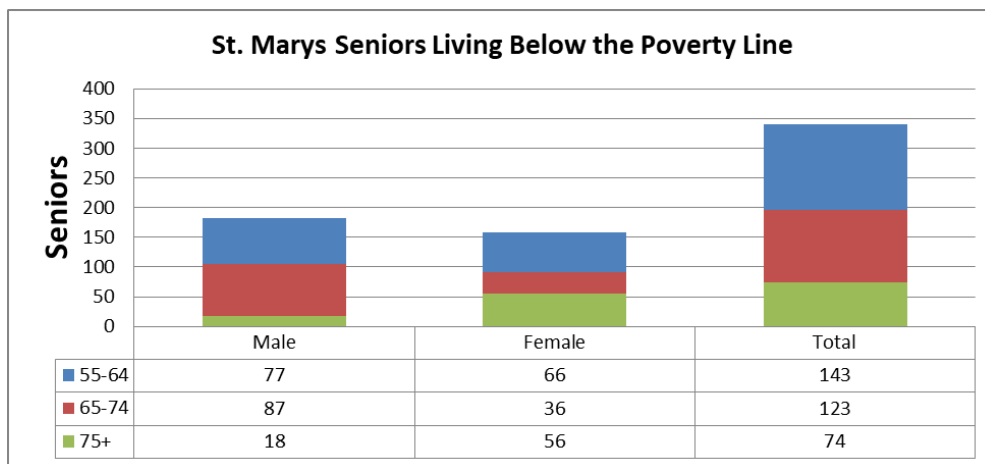
- 1) During the month of June 2015, Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) of Georgia Area Agency on Agingⁱⁱ (AAA) conducted a studyⁱⁱⁱ designed to assess the needs of people 55 or older living in the Coastal Georgia Region. The study examined physical and mental health needs, personal and home-related needs, nutritional and dietary needs, social and recreational needs, financial needs and self-sufficiency. The study was conducted via random digital telephone interviewing and a total of 1,000 people (55+) were surveyed. The results of the CRC AAA assessment were reviewed and considered by the Senior Task Force. It was determined that, in the CRC AAA report, Camden County specific findings are similar to St. Marys based findings documented by the Senior Task Force. However, because the CRC AAA assessment limited its findings to the county level, and only 8 percent of those surveyed in District 12 were residents of Camden County, no specific CRC AAA findings are referenced in this Senior Task Force report.
- 2) Needs of seniors are determined by many aspects of the aging experience. This can depend on gender, race, social class and other social factors. Demographic reports^{iv} show that in St. Marys there is a nearly 50-50 split between male and female: composed of 74 percent White, 18 percent Black, 6 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Asian and other races. As displayed in Table 1, nearly 20 percent of St. Marys residents are age 55 or older. The senior population (65+) is nearly 10 percent of the City’s more than 17,000 residents, and another 10 percent are between 55 and 64 years old.

Table 1 Senior Population (55+)



- 3) By 2030, nationwide, all of the baby boomers will have moved into the ranks of the older population. This will result in a shift in the national age structure from 13 percent of the population aged 65 and older in 2010 to more than 20 percent in 2030^v. A similar shift can be expected in St. Marys' population.
- 4) This growing number of senior citizens includes financially secure, well educated, and physically active seniors; as well as economically disadvantaged, socially isolated, or functionally impaired older adults. Table 2 displays the current numbers of St. Marys residents that live below the poverty line^{vi}.

Table 2 Senior population living below the poverty line



- 5) Today, serving people in their 60's, 70's and 80's means that a center must serve people raised in the 1930's, 40's, 50's and 60's a forty year span filled with some of the biggest changes our nation has ever undergone. The musical tastes, political and social mores of individuals born and raised in these different decades can be extremely diverse. Some were born when Social Security was created and others worry Social Security will not be there for them. Some were born years before computers were invented and others were among the first computer programmers. The variety of needs, experiences and expectations is vast – creating synergies and potential tensions for a senior center to manage.
- 6) Regardless of the option chosen to satisfy the needs of eligible seniors in St. Marys, the option selected by the Mayor and City Council needs to: (1) Provide a gathering place where seniors meet to pursue mutual interests, receive services, and take part in activities that will enhance their health, wellness and quality of life; (2) reduce isolation of program participants through socialization; and (3) address potential malnutrition and/or hunger through the provision of nutritionally balanced meals.

KEY FINDINGS

In order to understand the specific challenges and needs of the City of St. Marys Senior Center and senior population, it was necessary to obtain factual data. Opinions and perceptions are useful but must be considered within the context of the history of the Senior Center, how it functions today, numbers of seniors eligible to participate, actual numbers of participants, and the cost of doing business.

Appendices A – J, coupled with the needs assessment, document specific findings identified during record reviews, meetings, interviews, and general research. A synopsis of these findings that suggest actions are required is as follows:

1) Financial Impact:

- a) The City of St Marys leases the Senior Center Facility (valued at more than \$500,000) for \$10 per year. To operate the Senior Center, the City spends more than \$150,000 per year. Included in this cost is more than \$45,000 for food and drink; of which the Senior Authority contributes \$30,000.
- b) Based on the average number of daily (M-F) participants (31) – including nearly half that only attend during the lunch period, the average cost per participant is more than \$4,900 per year.
- c) Nearly half of the seniors who attend the Senior Center for lunch (12-20) do not attend the Center for other daily activities; a condition that drives City cost with limited **wellness program**^{vii} objectives achieved.

2) Accountability:

- a) Multiple contacts at various City staff and Senior Authority board levels have led to confusion, misinformation, and misinterpretation of roles.
 - i) The City needs to better clarify the point of contact for funding requests, data reporting, and feedback.
 - ii) The Authority needs to better understand its role as a funding resource and landlord.
- b) The interpretation and application of City and Senior Center policies and procedures are inconsistent; contributing to record keeping errors and confusion among stakeholders.
- c) The absence of automated records detracts from the efficiency and effectiveness of Senior Center operations. Paper based records and reports vary in completeness, legibility, and accuracy. An inordinate amount of time and labor is expended to process.
- d) Trend analysis, benefit-cost ratio calculations, and program and activity performance evaluations are not conducted; limiting fact-based information for staff and management consideration, planning, and actions.

3) Utilization / Programming

- a) Less than 4 percent (135) of eligible seniors (3,400) attend the senior center **at least once per year**. Nationwide, between 10 to 20 percent of elderly adults attend senior centers at least once a year.
 - i) Marketing of the Senior Center’s menus, schedules, and program opportunities is inadequate
 - ii) There is no active recruiting program for eligible seniors
 - iii) There is no active volunteer engagement or outreach program
 - iv) There are insufficient program options to attract more participants
- b) Less than half of the Senior Center operating days (230-244) has specific activities or events scheduled.
- c) The Senior Center is closed for two weeks during the Christmas and New Year holiday season. This is up to 6 workdays beyond the standard 12 City holidays. This leaves participating seniors without opportunity for socialization and meals at a time when they may be especially vulnerable to isolation.
- d) Friday “dining out” overrides in-house lunch service on Fridays; leaving a third or more of regular attendees without a provided lunch and socializing opportunity.
- e) There is little consensus among participating seniors in regard to senior center program wants and needs, partly due to the wide range of ages of 60 to 95.
- f) Common in interview results with participating seniors was the sense that their respective opinions and preferences was not welcomed and had little to no influence on day to day activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Three recommendations and four options are offered for the Mayor and City Council to consider, choose, and implement. The recommendations and options reflect the objectives, priorities, and vision identified in the City’s Master Plan, selected standards defined by The Coastal Area Agency on Aging (AAA), and information gathered from County and City staff and senior community.

- 1) The Senior Task Force recommends that the Mayor and City Council thank the Senior Advisory Committee for their service and dissolve the Senior Advisory Committee.
- 2) The Senior Task Force recommends that the Mayor and City Council select one of the four listed options.
- 3) The Senior Task Force recommends that, after the option is chosen, the Mayor and City Council extend the assignment of the Senior Task Force, for no more than three months, to facilitate the implementation of the selected option.

OPTIONS

Essential to the long term success of the option chosen will be making every effort to achieve community awareness and buy-in; resulting in community trust and support. The advantages and disadvantages of each of these options are presented in the “Conclusion” section that follows the description of these four options. (If Option 1 is selected, the City will retain full financial and operational responsibility for the St. Marys Senior Center. To implement this option, specific recommendations are provided in Annex A: Option 1 Details.)

Option 1: Revitalize St. Marys Senior Center

Of the four options, this option requires the most time and labor of City staff. However, with full implementation, it can result in a more effective senior center with little to no interruption or inconvenience to participating seniors.

Creating a desired ***Traditional Senior Center***^{viii} model will require acceptance of a change in philosophy from a “free lunch program” to a full service program. This new model can provide for better utilization of the facility, enhanced programs for seniors, and a better utilization of staff and financial resources.

Both National Council on Aging (NCOA) and Area Agency on Aging (AAA) provide well researched policies, procedures and best practices that City management can use in developing this new model. (The Task Force can provide those documents to management.)

Should this option be selected, Task Force recommendations on key elements of implementation are provided in Annex A.

Option 2: Transfer the responsibilities and operations of St. Marys Senior Center to St. Marys Hospital Authority (dba Senior Authority)

This option would require the City to obtain written agreement with the St. Marys Hospital Authority (dba Senior Authority) to accept full responsibility for the continued operation of the St. Marys Senior Center.

While the City has dozens of vital services to perform, the sole purpose of the Senior Authority is to provide funding for seniors in St. Marys. Although the Senior Authority has sufficient funds to operate the Senior Center, it would need to make adjustments to its budget and incorporate other programs it currently funds into the new senior center operation. As with Option 1, a key object of this option is to revitalize the Senior Center with needed changes and upgrades, and complete the transition with little to no interruption to basic senior center services.

Any such transfer of responsibility would require assurance that the Authority is in compliance with current bylaws and all City and State Ordinances.

Option 3: Outsource the full operation of St. Marys Senior Center to Camden County Personal Services Administration (PSA) Leisure Services

This option is considered possible after the Senior Task Force had a discussion with William Brunson^{ix}, Executive Director of the Camden County Public Service Authority (PSA). Mr. Brunson would consider proposing this option to his Board of Directors if requested to do so. Should it be agreeable, outsourcing management of the St. Marys Senior Center would place the program under the purview of an organization and individual experienced in managing senior centers. Such an arrangement would necessitate that the Senior Center would operate under the same policies and rules that apply to the Camden County Senior Center located in Woodbine, Georgia.

If this option is selected and negotiated, the final relationship between the City of St. Marys and the Camden County PSA would be similar to the current outsourcing arrangements regarding the St. Marys Aquatic Center.

Option 4: Close St. Marys Senior Center and encourage St. Marys seniors to use Camden County Senior Center in Woodbine, Georgia.

Several St. Marys seniors regularly attend the Camden County Senior Center in Woodbine, Georgia. Since the Woodbine Center is open to all eligible seniors in the County, it has been confirmed that it has the capacity to serve additional St. Marys Seniors. The Woodbine Center is financed through County, State, and Federal funds, through a contract with Coastal Regional Commission (CRC). As such, it is in compliance with all of the standards set forth by Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

Under these arrangements St. Marys seniors could drive to the Woodbine facility or utilize the CRC provided free bus service; departing St. Marys at approximately 8 a.m. and returning at approximately 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Minimal financial support may be requested of the City until AAA financial support is adjusted to reflect increased attendance.

CONCLUSION

With proper supervision, adequate policies and procedures, and the engagement of automated record keeping, the St. Marys Senior Center staff can perform necessary tasks without an appointed advisory committee.

Regarding the four options, there are discernible and measurable advantages and disadvantages.

Option 1: Revitalize St. Marys Senior Center

- 1) The most significant difference in the four options is that only in Option 1 does the City maintain full control and, in concert with the Senior Authority, full financial responsibility.
- 2) Vital to the success of this option is responsive funding (donations) from the Senior Authority to support the ongoing increases in food costs and the additional costs of improved and expanded wellness program activities.
- 3) The **advantages** of this option are:
 - a) Precise, unambiguous, enforced policies and procedures that minimize confusion and conflict among interested parties.
 - b) Eligible St. Marys residents would continue to be in close proximity to senior center services.
- 3) The **disadvantages** of this option are:
 - a) The cost of operating and maintaining the St. Marys Senior Center will continue to escalate, increasing the City tax burden and relying more and more on donations; as well as anticipated user fees.
 - b) The significant changes in philosophy and accountability needed to successfully implement and manage the revitalization of the St. Marys Senior Center may be too daunting to accomplish with existing resources.

Option 2: Transfer to Senior Authority

- 1) In Option 2, with full concurrence of the Senior Authority, the City would transfer the full responsibility of the Senior Center to the Senior Authority. The expectation would be that the Senior Authority would fund programs and services equal to or greater than those outlined in Option 1 and Annex A.
- 2) The **advantages** of this option are:
 - a) The City would be relieved of the operational responsibilities and costs to operate and maintain the Center and senior services; saving the City budget and tax payer more than \$130,000 per year; plus additional anticipated costs due to improved attendance and growth, program enhancements, and inflation.

- b) The Senior Authority's sole mission is to provide services to St. Marys seniors. That single focus on one service area should bring more dedicated attention to the Center. It would also permit the Authority to bring several of its other senior programs into the Senior Center for a central location for services currently provided.
 - c) Eligible St. Marys residents would continue to be in close proximity to senior center services.
- 3) The **disadvantages** of this option are:
- a) The current Authority leadership may not be in a position to oversee and manage such a transition.
 - b) Current participants who reside outside of the City of St. Marys would not be served.

Option 3: Outsource to PSA

- 1) In Option 3, the City of St. Marys would negotiate and contract with the Camden County Public Service Authority (PSA) to manage and operate the St. Marys Senior Center to the same standards and criteria applied at the Camden County Senior Center in Woodbine, Georgia.
- 2) The **advantages** of this option are:
 - a) A professional, qualified, and experienced organization and staff would operate the St. Marys Senior Center in accordance with standard rules and procedures.
 - b) The Center would benefit from additional funding and services offered by state and federal agencies that are not currently available to the City. There is the potential of a cost savings for the City.
 - c) The Senior Authority could proportionally fund activities for St. Marys residents.
 - d) Eligible St. Marys residents would continue to be in close proximity to senior center services.
- 3) The **disadvantages** of this option are:
 - a) In the near term, some financial responsibilities (to be negotiated) will continue to fall on the City and Senior Authority.
 - b) Seniors would experience a change in how services are delivered as the program would be expected to meet Georgia Agency on Aging requirements and change is always difficult.

Option 4: Close and Utilize Woodbine Senior Center

- 1) In Option 4, the City of St Marys would close the St. Marys Senior Center and encourage eligible seniors to attend the Camden County Senior Center in Woodbine, Georgia; using Costal Regional Center (CRC) provided bus service or private transportation as desired.
- 2) The **advantages** of this option are:

- a) The City would be relieved of the financial and management demands of operating a social services program.
 - b) The Senior Authority could use the facility for other purposes serving seniors.
 - c) St. Marys seniors would expand their contact with other area seniors and would have access to a wider range of active programs and activities.
- 3) The **disadvantages** of this option are:
- a) Additional travel time will be required of St. Marys seniors.
 - b) In the short term, some financial support may be needed from the City and Senior Authority pending financial support adjustments made by the AAA.

APPENDICES

Note: It is recognized that in these appendices there are redundant findings and observations. This is partially due to the source and venue that the information was gathered by different Senior Task Force members. Since the results reinforcement rather than conflict, the redundant entries remain.

Appendix A – Senior Advisory Committee

- 1) The Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) was formed in 2010 to oversee Senior Center programming. Interviews with members of the original Advisory Committee found similar expressions of ineffectiveness recently expressed by the existing committee. The original Committee members indicated that they had little influence over programs although they recommended numerous projects.
- 2) Senior Advisory Committee rules of procedure, dated March 3, 2015, includes and specifies that the Committee's role is to:
 - a) Expand services to senior citizens in the following areas: Education, Health, Nutrition, Recreation, Facility Enhancement, Social (socialization), and Volunteers. Considering records dating back to CY 2014, there is little evidence that these services and areas of interest have been substantially or measurably expanded or improved during the past four years. Of particular note is the absence of any record of volunteer recruitment or outreach activity.
 - b) Advertise and promote senior center.
 - i) Other than an annual advertisement in St. Marys magazine, a single notice run by the Senior Authority in the Tribune & Georgian on February 8, 2018, and invitations to special occasion Senior Center parties, there is no record of using public media or other forms of communications to regularly advertise and promote the senior center. Senior Center staff personnel indicate that "word of mouth" is their primary advertising strategy.
 - ii) The Senior Center home page in the City of St. Marys website lists activities, services and schedules for public view. However, as demonstrated in this report, the information provided on the web page does not accurately reflect current Senior Center schedules, practices and operations. In addition, the online Senior Center calendar is not used, nor is planned lunch menus announced – both significant sets of information necessary to attract eligible seniors to join in Senior Center activities.
- 3) On October 10, 2017, at a regularly scheduled Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting, members stated that the SAC is ignored when there is disagreement with the City, and voiced concerns that the SAC is ineffective and is of no use. As a result, a motion was made, seconded, and approved by a majority vote to disband the SAC as of 10 October, 2017. When reported to the City Council, the Council accepted this action as a recommendation – a subject of this Senior Task Force assignment and report.

Appendix B – Senior Center Background

- 1) The St. Marys Senior Center has been in existence about 30 years according to staff. It began as a small luncheon club that had been part of a church program and for undocumented reasons was transferred to a city program. At one point there was some discussion between the city of St. Marys and the Area Agency on Aging division of the Coastal Regional Commission about contracting with them for funding. For reasons not documented but verbally recalled by some, the Mayor at the time and the Center staff determined the required paperwork to obtain federal and state funding for the Center would be burdensome. The Area Agency then contracted with the Camden County Commission to fund the Camden County Senior Center in Woodbine. That contract permits both state and federal funds to flow to the Woodbine Center that is managed by the PSA. About a third of the participants in the Woodbine program are St. Marys residents who prefer the Woodbine Center over the St. Marys Center.
- 2) The St. Marys Senior Center was located in what is now the Main Street office in the City Hall building downtown. In 2009, after the City and the Hospital Authority agreed to a ten year \$10 annual lease, the Senior Center moved to a much larger and nicer facility at 120 Davis Street – owned by the Hospital Authority. Based on St. Marys Hospital Authority (dba Senior Authority) “Statement of Financial Position – June 30, 2017” and Camden County tax records^x the entire property (exempt from taxes) is valued at \$400,000 to more than \$500,000.
- 3) In addition to the annual lease fee, the city pays for limited maintenance and repairs, landscaping services, and alarm protection. The Authority has made various improvements to the property over time. In early 2018, the Senior Authority contracted for interior painting and roof replacement.

Appendix C – Senior Center Composition, Parameters, and Conditions

- 1) Hours and Days of Operation:
 - a) The Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 11:30 and 2-4 p.m. on Friday. Without actual records of hourly and daily usage, it is not possible to determine best use hours. However, because the Center is currently a 'luncheon based' program most activity occurs between 10 and 1 with lunch served at 11:30. (The Friday partial closure is detailed later in the appendix.)
 - b) The average number of workdays (M-F) in a year is 249 (261 weekdays minus 12 City-recognized holidays). Historically, the Senior Center is closed for the two week Christmas and New Year Holiday period. This further reduces the number of available days of operation at the Senior Center by an additional four to six (4-6) weekdays. Therefore, the approximate number of weekdays that the Senior Center could be available and open for public use is 243 weekdays per year. In past years, due to storm evasion and other unplanned events, the Senior Center has been open to provide services between 233 and 243 days.
- 2) Staffing: The Center is staffed by a full-time Senior Center Coordinator who has been with the program more than 15 years and two part-time assistants, one of whom works from 8 to 1 and the second from 11 to 4. A third part-time employee is on call to fill in when necessary. All staff members are employees of the city of St. Marys. The Coordinator reports to the City's Human Resources Director who in turn reports directly to the City Manager.
- 3) Attendance: The Center is open to all seniors age 55 and over. Most Senior Centers restrict the beginning age to either 60 or 65. According to staff, at a point in time there were some disabled individuals aged 55 who needed the center as a resource center and the decision was made (unclear by whom) to reduce the eligibility age to 55. The Hospital Authority dba Senior Authority limits its financial support to those 55 and over who reside in St. Marys. It is assumed that the Senior Authority age criteria responds to the Senior Center's criteria but that has not been factually established.
- 4) With an age span of 55-100, there is a challenge to provide programs to meet the needs of such a wide range of age groups. Table 1, presented in "Needs Assessment", provides a clear definition of the numbers of St. Marys seniors in these eligible age groups.
- 5) Procedures and Practices:
 - a) Participants are asked to sign in daily at the Center but there is no requirement or attempt to have them indicate the time of arrival or departure. Record reports (summaries) are kept manually based on sign-ins and staff recall of who attended but failed to sign in. There is no record of residence of participant by city.
 - b) Although the written procedures indicate that seniors must inform staff which days they plan to have lunch, those records are not actually recorded. Staff orders 30 meals two days a week and 35 two days a week regardless of how many seniors have indicated they plan to have lunch. There is no plan or procedure for seniors to accept some accountability for ordering a lunch and then deciding not to eat.
 - c) There is no record maintained for how many seniors participate in which programs.

- 6) The number of seniors who participate in the dining out lunch experience every Friday is usually far less (less than two thirds) than regular attendance. The Center closes while those seniors dine out as they are accompanied by one or more staff. Some use the bus, requiring a staff driver, and others meet them at the designated restaurant. (As a footnote, it is important to note that most Senior Centers who include “dining out” in their program plans do so quarterly. Occasionally, it will be monthly but never weekly.)
- 7) Attendance is promoted mostly by “word of mouth” according to staff. While the roster of seniors who have at any point in time signed up to participate is over 200, the average daily attendance is closer to 30 including the lunch group. The roster is outdated and includes duplications as well as names of seniors who have never attended the Center.
- 8) It is clear that record maintenance from both the Center and participant perspective have been weak and less than desirable. It is equally apparent that adopting much of today’s technology could improve record keeping and reduce staff time and expenses. The city website could be an asset in communicating with seniors. The current Senior Center webpage is stagnant with no current information but could be used to post menus and program activities.
- 9) Luncheon Program:
 - a) As indicated, the Center first began as a small luncheon club about 30 years ago. Over time various programs have been initiated or introduced but in the last few years, the Center has returned to a focus on luncheon and a few games and puzzles some seniors enjoy before and after lunch.
 - b) Steffens Restaurant has provided catering for lunches for the last 10 years. The menu is planned by Steffens with guidelines provided by the City. At the time Steffens was the only restaurant that agreed to provide catering services. As more restaurants and catering businesses are emerging, it is the City’s plan to go out for bids in the spring/summer of 2018. The city finance department negotiates the contract with input from Senior Center staff. The current price for a meal is \$6.75 plus a \$15 delivery charge each day. The current letter of agreement with Steffens includes a 5% annual increase.
 - c) Current procedures indicate seniors must arrive by 11:15 in order to participate in the luncheon program and are expected to call 24 hours in advance to cancel a meal. That standard is neither monitored nor regulated, occasionally resulting in over ordered meal portions.
 - d) During the past year some senior participants have raised questions regarding the quality of food with seniors asked via surveys to indicate preferences.
 - i) As with any survey regarding food, there are those who are pleased with luncheon choices and those who are not.
 - ii) Over time, written and verbal comments regarding meal quality from participating seniors have varied. Based on complaints of a few seniors, the Hospital Authority dba Senior Authority chose to employ a dietitian to assess the lunches served at the St. Marys Senior Center and issue a report on findings and recommendations. The dietitian’s report was issued in February 2018 and is available from the Senior Authority. This report is under

review by City staff. The Senior Task Force has reviewed the dietitian's report and has provided comments to the City Manager.

- e) Center procedures state that relatives of participants may visit one day a week and pay for their own lunch. However, there is no method for accepting that type of payment and no record that the procedure was ever implemented.
- f) The procedures also state that a donation of \$2.50 for each meal is recommended but not required. (No one on staff has any knowledge of how this figure was determined.) There is currently considerable confusion and controversy regarding the donation policy. Some seniors faithfully make their donations each day and are frustrated that others, whom they consider in the same financial position, never do. Adding to the confusion is the Senior Authority Board telling seniors they should not make a donation because the Senior Authority is paying for their lunch. The Authority does provide \$30,000 annually for the luncheon program but the actual cost during FY 2017 was \$43,000. Also, it is estimated that an additional \$ 3,000 is expended for drinks, paper products, and other consumables in support of the more than 6,000 meals served.
- g) Many Senior Centers have been re-thinking their approach to "free food" and how to best manage expectations with reality. While socializing over a meal is a preferred method for encouraging interaction and exchange, the client base of any Center needs to be considered. Some centers cater to a large low income population and others, like St. Marys, do not. Our Senior Center accepts seniors aged 55 and up with at least a couple of seniors who are nearing the century mark. Most in the 55 age bracket are still working while those near the century mark have a much different expectation of meal preferences. As stated earlier, this age gap requires consideration for food as well as general programming.
- h) Leftover food is discarded, frozen for later use, or taken home by staff. Seniors are currently not permitted to take food home for later use. (Some Centers do provide methodologies for doing so but this Center does not.)

10) Transportation:

- a) The 10 passenger van, owned by the city, is available to transport seniors to the Center at 9 a.m. and return them home at 2 p.m. Seniors must call the night before to arrange transportation. The bus is also used to transport some seniors to the Friday dining out lunches. One of the two part time staff assistants drive the bus, one in the a.m. and one in the p.m. shift. The 2 p.m. departure time is dictated by the fact that part-time staff drivers are also responsible for daily cleaning of the facility and because of their part-time status cannot work beyond 4 p.m.
- b) The bus has not been used for any field trips in recent years and was out of commission for several weeks last year for repairs.
- c) The City is considering alternate transportation methods to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

11) Weekly Program Content:

- a) Although there is a monthly calendar on the bulletin board listing programs, there are very few programs that would be considered "programs" by NCOA (National Council on Aging^{xi}) or Area Agency on Aging standards. A check of the last four years shows very few planned programs

beyond luncheon, games, puzzles and occasional bingo. The participants play no role in identifying potential daily or monthly programs although two seniors do plan the bingo days. Some seniors have identified field trips they would like to take but most are expensive and not in the realm of reality for a tax funded program.

- b) In speaking with seniors, there are numerous inexpensive programs they believe could be included in monthly activities. Staff indicates they have been preoccupied in the last couple of years managing daily crisis or handling squabbles among participants leaving them no time to plan program content.
 - c) Unlike most Senior Centers, ours has no exercise programs planned on a weekly or even monthly basis. The walking path is rarely utilized by seniors and neither are the picnic tables. There have been no field trips since a trip to the Zoo in 2016. The senior line dancers use the facility for practice every Tuesday and Thursday and this is included as a program, but in reality it cannot be interpreted as an actual program for all seniors. The Center provides a practice site for the seniors who participate in this off site program but it would not be considered a program in the general sense of a planned program for regular participants.
 - d) Seniors are not actively engaged in the development of programs. Nor do they assist in welcoming newcomers, helping serve meals or any other aspect of creating or introducing new programs. By most center standards, they would be considered passive rather than active "members."
- 12) In the past seniors have raised funds, via raffles, and have their own bank account which they have used to buy birthday cakes, sympathy cards and prizes for bingo. There are questions about the appropriateness of how that account has been used by the Senior Authority to channel funds to the Senior Center for special events. Seniors have raised questions about how the \$1700+ in the fund should be spent since meetings of the group and additional fund raising programs have been terminated due to strife and disagreements among seniors.
- 13) Special Events:
- a) The Hospital Authority dba Senior Authority sponsors two special events for seniors participating at the Center. The Senior Prom, a program created about 10 years ago by volunteers associated with the Senior Advisory Committee, and a Christmas party.
 - i) The Senior Prom was originally managed and funded by special donations raised by the volunteers involved. It eventually evolved into a popular event organized by Center staff with assistance from seniors and funded via a request to the Senior Authority. In 2017, the staff Coordinator was unable to manage the event and volunteers of the Senior Advisory Committee stepped forward to manage the event. The Senior Authority allocates \$1500 for the event by writing a check to the Senior Citizen Fund. The Coordinator asks the Fund Treasurer, a Center participant, to cash the check for cash. She then makes necessary purchases for the event and submits receipts and any unused funds in cash to the Authority Treasurer. (The annual difference is about \$300.)
 - ii) The Christmas party funding is handled in the same manner. However, the event in 2017 was a meal at *Lang's Marina Restaurant* open to all seniors in St. Marys. With attendance of

72, there were obviously many people who attended who were not regular participants in the Senior Center program since only 25-30 are daily participants at the Center. There was no record of names of individuals who attended or verification of senior status. While the Senior Authority funded the event, it asked the Center's Staff Coordinator to plan and execute the event, handle the finances, and return cash not spent.

- b) The Senior Authority has advised it would be willing to consider renting a bus for select field trips for the seniors, but staff have not pursued that possibility in the last two years.

14) Donations:

- a) Although the Procedures document suggests everyone consider donating \$2.50 per meal, there continues to be confusion on donations. Do donations offset the cost of meals or are they a contribution to the regular Senior Center program? Are donations encouraged or discouraged? How are they applied to the budget?
- b) The procedure for handling and recording donations is a typical one for donation box contributions. The two part time staff tallies the donations and record the amount at the end of each day. They sign off on an envelope that is sealed and locked in a drawer. The Senior Coordinator records the amount in a separate log. Each week the envelopes are taken to the Finance Director for an official accounting. Last fiscal year the Finance Department recorded \$5,890 in contributions and credited the amount to the general account of the city. The staff procedures comply with safeguards usually associated with this type of donation.
- c) As indicated, the subject of donations requires further discussion and resolution that is applicable with IRS regulations and addresses both seniors' desires to participate in the funding of the project and the city's budget process.

- 15) Policies and Procedures: There are no written and comprehensive policies governing the Senior Center but there is a set of operational procedures written in January 2007, revised in 2008 and again in 2010. Seniors participating in the program are asked to sign this document and comply with the rules therein. It is clearly time to review the procedures and also adopt policies for the Center that carefully set forth mutual expectations as well as basic requirements for participation in the programs.

16) Relationships:

- a) The Senior Center Coordinator reports to a Director level position in the city, who in turn reports to the City Manager. The Coordinator's relationship with the Senior Advisory Committee has fluctuated over time. Original Committee members indicate they had little influence over programs although they recommended numerous projects. In later years, the Coordinator used the Committee to support her requests for City or Senior Authority funding and for disciplinary action. The Committee continued to have little influence over program decisions or budgets. The relationship was collegial but not impactful.
- b) The Center Staff Coordinator reports that the relationship with the Senior Authority was positive until two years ago when it appeared to become more adversarial for reasons she could not elucidate. At Board meetings the past two years the Senior Authority has expressed concern that the City is not working collaboratively with them to produce a more effective and viable

Center. The city expresses an opinion that while the Authority contributes a not insignificant \$33,000 a year in meals and entertainment for the Center, the city's annual commitment of providing funding of \$125,000+ annually to operate the Center is a significant contribution of city taxpayer dollars to serve such a limited number of senior participants.

17) Participant Perceptions:

- a) Quotes from participating seniors are included in Appendix D, but it is safe to say that Senior Center participant perceptions fall into four distinct categories. (Quotations here are paraphrased and synthesized.)
 - i) Group 1 "We are very happy with everything at the Center. We have been coming for years and enjoy socializing and meeting our friends for Steffen's wonderful lunch. We like low impact games and are not interested in more programming. We love the staff and wish those who complain would go away. Keep everything just the way it is."
 - ii) Group 2 "We come to socialize, mingle and stay in touch with others. This is an important place for us because we are alone or bored or do not know anyone in town. We like it but wish there were more activities and more options. We'd like more than lunch and a puzzle. We would like to see more seniors use the Center and would like more voice in creating new programs." (Most had specific inexpensive ideas on new programs.)
 - iii) Group 3 "We have reached that age where we expect and deserve a lot of free things. Entertain us; transport us; give us better food; meet our personal needs. We're senior citizens and we're entitled."
 - iv) Group 4 "We still work at age 55 but because we can get a free lunch, we do. We drop in and if we don't like the menu we go to Missy's Kitchen. We don't care much about anything else at the Center."
- b) Fortunately Groups 1 and 2 are most prevalent, but the attitudes and opinions of the other groups need to be factored into revamping and reinvigorating the Center to become a more dynamic and vibrant facility for seniors while acknowledging the challenges of addressing different expectations of individuals aged 55-100 who might utilize services.

18) The Task Force did not use nor did it make any effort to verify the Senior Center performance measures and outcomes documented in the City's annual budget reports^{xii}. Nevertheless, it is noted that the results published in the annual budget reports do not align with the findings and results determined by the Senior Task Force. In particular,

- a) Senior Center *Performance Outcomes* called into question are the City's report of 95 percent of senior participants rating individual Senior Center events and services as "good" or above. Anecdotal information gathered by the Senior Task Force indicates a smaller number of satisfied participants. However, a scientific survey was not conducted during this study. Therefore, no specific measurement is provided.
- b) Senior Center *Efficiency/Effectiveness Indicators* that report "per capita" data is seen to offer little value to understand the cost ratio of operating the Senior Center.
 - i) Regarding *Departmental expenditures per capita*, more than 80 percent of the City's population is not eligible to participate in senior center activities. However, the City's total

population is used as the baseline for the “per capita” calculation with a reported result for FY 2017 as \$8.19 per capita. Even though this is technically correct, it does not provide a true measure of the cost ratio and value to the community. In addition, supplemental costs satisfied by the Public Works Department (\$5,726) and Senior Authority (\$2,259) should be but are not recognized in the cost to operate the Senior Center. The following provides an alternate perspective regarding the cost ratio of the Senior Center.

- (1) Based on age-eligible City residents (3,400), an approximate annual cost per capita to operate the Senior Center is \$45.
 - (2) Based on the average number of daily participants (31 @ 5 days per week), including those that reside outside of St. Marys and those that attend only for lunch, an approximate annual cost per capita to operate the Senior Center is \$4,900.
 - ii) Regarding *Senior Center annual attendance per capita*, the same logic is used in the City reports. For FY 2017, the City reports 49 percent attendance per capita. However, based on the number of eligible St. Marys residents (3,400) and the estimated number of seniors that attend the Senior Center at least once per year (135), the estimated attendance per capita is less than 4 percent.
- 19) The absence of automated records detracts from the efficiency and effectiveness of Senior Center operations. Paper based records and reports vary in completeness, legibility, and accuracy. An inordinate amount of time and labor is expended to process. Trend analysis, benefit-cost ratio calculations, and program and activity performance evaluations are not conducted; limiting fact-based information for staff and management consideration, planning, and actions.
- 20) There is approximately \$1,700 in a checking account created by participating seniors for the purpose of providing flowers, cards, and cakes to recognize member milestones. Future disbursement of these funds needs to be addressed.

Appendix D – Interview Results – St. Marys Senior Center Participants

Over a three week period in January and February 2018, interviews were conducted at the Senior Center with the majority of the “regulars” and other frequent attendees. They were asked what they liked best about the Center; what they did not like and what kind of activities or programs they would like to see added. The comments below came from both group discussions and individual conversations. They reflect the differing expectations of participants, ages 58 to 90. They are in no particular order.

- 1) “We don’t need to be entertained. We just enjoy chatting, socializing and mingling with others our own age.”
- 2) “More activities would be good but not sure we could agree on what they should be.”
- 3) “We need to take more field trips. I especially want to go to more nightly entertainment venues in JAX.”
- 4) (Group discussion) “We love Rindy; have known her forever but wish she’d listen more, especially to newcomers who come once and never come back. New people sometimes don’t fit in, though. We ask them to play Rubicon with us and they don’t want to. They don’t blend in with us.”
- 5) “Rindy should be able to do whatever she wants. She’s been here 18 years and knows what we like. She shouldn’t have to answer to anyone. City Hall just gets in the way.”
- 6) “Some people are still working and just come for a free lunch and leave. They don’t interact at all.”
- 7) “Exercise is too much work for aging seniors. The walking path is boring. I don’t like the chair exercises. Just like to eat and gossip.”
- 8) “We used to do a lot more things but now we don’t. I don’t know why. I asked but didn’t get an answer and I’ve learned you better not ask twice or you’ll be labeled a troublemaker like those four.”
- 9) “I’ve been coming here almost every day for 8 years. Lately there is a lot of confusion and friction. There’s a tug of war between different factions. Some like it the way it is and others want changes. We need resolution.”
- 10) “I just come for lunch and to play Rubicon with three other ladies. I don’t really interact with anyone else. I don’t see the reasons for the squabbles and just stay out of it. I don’t understand why people are pressured to take sides. It’s very unpleasant so I just stay out of it.”
- 11) “All this friction started over the disagreement about chipping in \$2.50 for lunch. Some seniors went to the Hospital Authority meeting and were told we should not make a donation because the Authority was buying our lunch. Several of us thought that was hurting the donation collection that we use for other things. It just seemed to escalate after that. The donation disagreement was the start and now every little thing is us versus them. Nothing ever gets resolved.”
- 12) (Two couples from Harriet’s Bluff) “We only come once a month for a free lunch. I pay my taxes and I want a free lunch whenever I can get it. We come to see old friends we knew when we lived here. (Went on to discuss in detail the problems caused by “the four”. Seemed a bit odd when he only attends once a month. Appeared to have been briefed on what to say.) When asked about other programs he wasn’t interested. “Like I said I come for a free lunch.”
- 13) “I come here because I don’t want to just sit at home. I want to socialize with others. We moved here from up north and didn’t know anyone. We thought we could make new friends. We also thought there would be more activities than jigsaw puzzles and a pool table.”
- 14) (What kind of programs would you like?) “Tai Chi was great but they moved out and didn’t come back; don’t know why. We’d use the ping pong table but there’s no net and it’s too wobbly. Would love shuffleboard. Like the pool table. Wish they hadn’t taken the treadmill away. Most of the

regulars here don't want any kind of change. They have their cliques and stick together. It's hard to break into their groups unless you want to play Rubicon or Bingo."

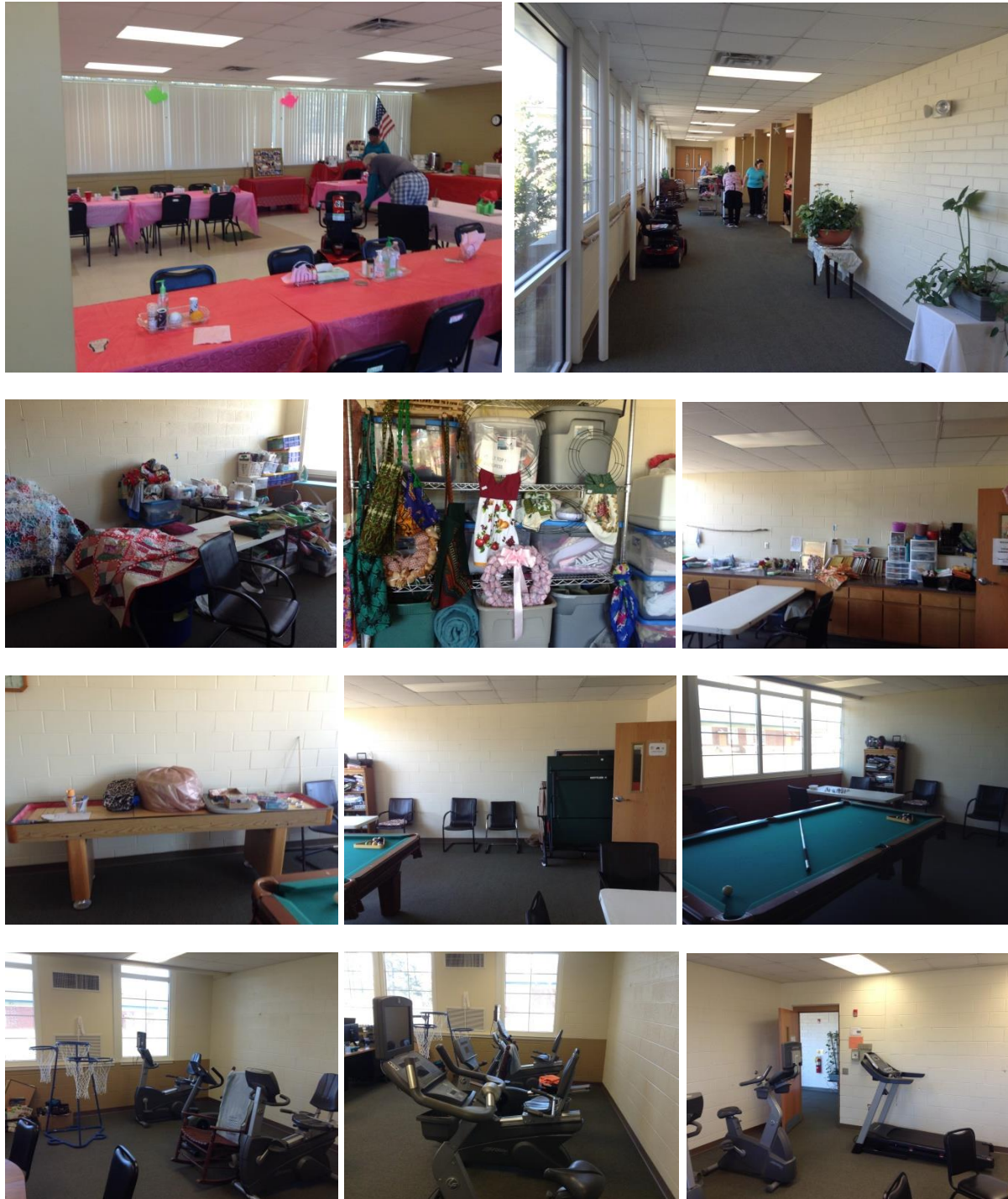
- 15) "Why can't I stay until 4; the bus insists on taking me home at 2? (Tried to explain bus schedule with drivers being part time employees limited to hours they can work; it's not a taxi service...but she failed to grasp the concept.)
- 16) (Lunch discussion with five men) "Socializing is good but we need more. We're not into puzzles or those card games the women play. We need more activity. We'd like outdoor stuff like Bocce Ball or Shuffleboard or Horseshoes. We get along with everyone and ignore the drama that some on both sides seem to enjoy." (Do you join the every Friday out-to-lunch crowd?) "No. We don't care much for their choices of restaurant or the group that goes. So we guys just tend to get together on Fridays and go where we want to for lunch."
- 17) (Do you use the picnic tables in the summer?) "Never have. No picnics or anything that could be fun. She's afraid someone will fall and hurt themselves and blame her. George offered to cook low country boil once but she said no. I don't know why; it would have been fun. Just hot dogs, hamburgers one day would be great in the summer. It's not what we should eat every day but once in a while it would be a nice change."
- 18) (Mrs. M. brings her mother in twice a week so she can visit with one of the guests she knows well. She cannot ride the bus because of dementia so someone has to stay with her.) "I worry there isn't enough activity and no exercise program but she enjoys lunching with Mr. X. so I bring her. She could really benefit from an exercise program although she can't participate in the card games. And I wish there was a salad option on the menu."
- 19) "I don't join the Friday out-to-lunch group but if the Center was open on Fridays I would come."
- 20) "I just live here half the year with my daughter and go back north to live with my son in the summer. Up there we have a great Center where meals are posted in advance and a whole week's worth of activities is online to see which ones you would like. It's not much bigger than this one but they just seem to do a lot more. When I can't drive any longer, I'm not sure I can get here. My daughter still works and can't drive me." (I explained the bus service which she knew nothing about and linked her with a staff assistant.)
- 21) "Our little group loves to have lunch and play Rubicon. We don't need or want anything else. That group that wants something else can always leave if they don't like it."
- 22) "It's not as much fun as it used to be. We don't do as many things. Anything you say is misconstrued. If you are seen talking with the "troublemakers" you will become suspect yourself. I get along with everyone but lately I'm afraid to talk to anyone. Whispers, tattling; it's like grammar school play yard. I don't like that."
- 23) "It would be much better if "those four" just left. If they don't like it, they should leave. Why should we change to accommodate them? We've been here longer."
- 24) (Asked the part time staff who interact the most with seniors their impressions of the concerns.) One said he had no problem with any of the seniors and thought the issues were overblown. One said the only time she noticed friction was when there wasn't any activity taking place and separate groups began squabbling. She said "when they're busy, everyone gets along fine." She said she wished that staff would listen more because almost everyone had some good ideas and valid questions. "It's a shame it's reached this point where you are forced to be on one side or the other."

Appendix E – Interviews and Observations at Camden County Senior Center (Woodbine)

In addition to observations of senior center activities and kitchen food preparation and service, interviews were conducted with Center staff and senior participants that volunteered to be interviewed.

- 1) There are 34 seniors (60+) in Camden County that are registered participants at the Camden County Senior Center - located in Woodbine Georgia. Of the 34 seniors:
 - a) 17 reside in Kingsland
 - b) 9 reside in St. Marys
 - c) 8 reside in unincorporated areas; primarily at the north end of Camden County
- 2) Average daily attendance (Monday through Friday) is 22.
- 3) Seniors sign in using a paper sign in sheet. However, seniors do not sign out.
- 4) Monthly Activity and Events Calendar is a product of inputs from seniors in attendance and is published at the start of the month. The paper copy of the electronic file is posted on the Senior Center central bulletin board. The basic routine is (1) Group Activity in the morning; (2) Lunch; and (3) Individual activities in the afternoon.
- 5) Bus arrives at 9 a.m. and leaves at 1:30 p.m. (12:30 on Friday.) Normally three busses are provided by CRC: one north bound, one to Kingsland, and one to St. Marys.
- 6) A Nutritionist prepared three-month (daily) menu is approved by National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (District 12) and provided to Senior Center for posting and implementation.
- 7) The Camden County Senior Services shares resources with “Head Start” for food preparation services, and other joint-use services (transportation) and facilities.
- 8) The number of seniors that have lunch is the same number that is in attendance during morning programs.
- 9) During voluntary interviews (8 seniors were interviewed 1-3 at a time):
 - a) Mixed opinions were stated by seniors regarding meal quality.
 - b) Mixed opinions were stated by seniors on senior center leadership. Some were satisfied while others stated that communications between seniors and staff was poor or non-responsive.
- 10) Donations are infrequent. When received, the donation is sent directly to Camden County Personal Services Administration (PSA).
- 11) The seniors have their own (internal) committee (Pres., Vice Pres., Secretary, and Treasurer). This senior committee appears to function. Three dollar (\$3.) monthly dues are collected and used for flowers, bowling, trips, and sick and death events.
- 12) Using new forms to effect better planning and cost savings, staff is reenergizing and enforcing the need for seniors to “sign-up” in advance for meals and transportation.
- 13) As displayed in the following photos, the Senior Center has several spaces (10) under one roof for administration, interviews, reading and TV, lavatories, kitchen, group and meal activities, exercise, games, and crafts.

Photo 1 Camden County Senior Center – Woodbine, Georgia



Appendix F – Meeting with District 12 Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Meeting with Area Agency on Aging (AAA)^{xiii} staff at the Coastal Regional Commission, Darien, Ga. March 1, 2018: Dionne Lovett – Aging Services Director, and Loreatha Jenkins – Wellness Manager

- 1) History of AAA funding for Senior Center in Camden County.
 - a) First program was sponsored by Community Action Agency. In 2008 when they decided not to pursue renewing their contract, AAA staff sought out other potential service providers. There was discussion at the time with officials in St. Marys but the only applicant to provide the service was the Camden County Commission who agreed to enter a contractual relationship with AAA to host the senior center within the county's PSA administration.
 - i) The Ralph Bunch Center in Woodbine was a natural location because of its kitchen facilities and partnership with Head Start.
 - ii) Last year's funding for the Woodbine Center (open to all county residents) was \$126,605 with \$79,636 from federal and state (via AAA) and \$46,969 from county funding. They serve between 15-20 persons daily.
 - b) Some AAA programs are available to non-member senior centers free of charge and others are fee based. Wellness programs utilizing volunteers as instructors are available if a community wants to send volunteers to be trained to deliver the programs. There is no charge for the training. If AAA is requested to send professionals to deliver the programs the fee is \$1500 for a 6 or 8 week program. In that event the program must be open to all seniors in the county. AAA is required by law to insure their programs are open to any senior in the county.
 - c) AAA funded programs cannot charge for meals but they are all encouraged to seek donations to help offset expenses. Centers not receiving AAA funding may charge fees and many do. Some are membership fees; some are via meal tickets at a discounted rate.
- 2) Most Centers in Georgia either have on site kitchens or have meals delivered by nearby institutions with kitchens (i.e. correctional institutions). None except St. Marys uses restaurant caterers which can be considered a challenge given the dietary requirements and the restaurant's need to make a profit.
- 3) This AAA does not offer professional consulting services to work with non-member Centers.

Appendix G – Budget Components and Financial Issues

- 1) There are two components of the budget for the Senior Center.
 - a) The City budget covers (1) Personnel Services and Benefits; (2) Purchased and Contracted Services; and (3) Supplies – including approximately 35 percent of expenses for lunch meals and other food and drink.
 - b) The Senior Authority annual donation for the lunch program augments the City budget to cover approximately 65 percent of the cost for lunch meals served Monday through Thursday.
 - c) Overall, City taxes pay for 80 percent of the costs to operate the St. Marys Senior Center and 20 percent are donations from the Senior Authority.
- 2) The City FY 2017 (Unaudited) Revenue & Expense Report for the Senior Center documents \$145,038.82 total for Senior Center labor, services, and supplies. Not recognized and not totaled in the Senior Center City budget are:
 - a) Public Works Department (PWD) labor, equipment, and materials used in response to Senior Center property and facility routines and work orders. In FY2017, this amount was \$5,727.
 - b) Financial augments provided by the Senior Authority directly to the Senior Center for special events/parties. In FY 2017, this amount was \$2,259.
 - c) Donations provided by Senior Center attendees and transferred to the City General Fund. In FY 2017, this amount was \$5,890.
 - d) Including these additional expenses in direct support of the Senior Center, the total FY 2017 expenses for the Senior Center is \$153,024 – a difference of nearly \$8,000.
- 3) Donations. This has become a controversial issue within the Center. Until the Authority began telling seniors (mostly complainers) that they did not have to donate because the Authority was paying for all lunches, this was not an issue. But now it is. The issues are twofold: (1) if seniors donate (whether for lunch or other programs), does the money go to offset the city department budget rather than go into the general fund? And (2) are donations appropriate if they are in any way tied to food? If donations are for the entire program why are we asking only a few regular attendees to chip in? Should there be an annual fund raising campaign for donations instead?
- 4) Charge for lunch. Most Senior Centers that charge for lunch are not a part of the Area Agency on Aging supported organizations. As we know those with AAA funding cannot charge for lunch. However those that do not receive federal funding tend to charge something. Those either charge membership fees annually or they charge a subsidized fee for lunch. For example, you pay \$2 for lunch every time you eat but you can buy tickets and turn them in rather than putting money in a donation box. What is the proposed philosophy (thus policy) for asking people to pay something for a lunch that really isn't "free"? Our seniors are not poor and most can afford a nominal fee. How do we address this touchy subject? Most of the regulars believe they should donate something and do. The newcomers think everything should be free because they are 65. That causes a rift with participants.
- 5) Additional attention to detail by staff is required when approving invoices. During FY 2017, three invoices from Steffens for meal services were erroneously approved, resulting in two overpayments and one underpayment – for a total overpayment of \$54.

Appendix H – Scheduled Services and Program Activities

- 1) Based on bus rider records, there is a history of low ridership. During FY 2018, on average, the number of riders (round trip) Monday through Thursday is 2 per day, and the average number of riders (round trip) on Friday – including lunch outings – is less than 8. During FY 2017, the bus was out of commission for 4 to 5 months. Otherwise, ridership in FY 2017 was nearly the same as FY 2018.
- 2) During the past five years, there has been 45 different activity and event names and terms recorded in the monthly calendars. For analysis purposes, these different names and terms fall into 10 categories. Specifically: (1) Arts/Craft; (2) Entertainment; (3) Exercise; (4) Games; (5) Group/Member Singing; (6) Line Dancing; (7) Medical Service; (8) Party; (9) Presentation; and (10) Trip/Outing.
 - a) Using baseline information (i.e. weekdays, holidays, storm evasion and other closures) discussed in Appendix C, and the totals of calendar-scheduled activities and events presented in Tables 3 and 4, on average, over the past five years, specific activities and events were scheduled for less than half of the days that the Senior Center was open. The balance of the days that the Senior Center was open was unstructured; leaving seniors to individually determine how they spent their time. The default activities engaged by the seniors when no scheduled activity is in progress are conversation, cards, table pool, puzzles, and tile and board games.
 - b) Also as demonstrated in Tables 3 and 4, more than 40 percent of each calendar month's scheduled activities are "Games" and "Arts/Crafts". There is no record or document that provides an explanation of the curriculum and/or group agenda for these specific activities. Therefore, based on interviews and observations, it is evident that most of these scheduled activity days depend on individual determination and small group participation – the same or similar to days without scheduled activities.
 - c) The primary activity scheduled on Fridays is a no-host dining-out lunch. As a result, starting at 11:30 a.m., the Senior Center is not open for other activities – including no in-house lunch service. Normal attendance at the Friday "dining-out" lunch is half or less of the daily Monday - Thursday lunch crowd. This Friday activity usually engages 2-3 staff members to drive and accompany the seniors at lunch.
 - d) Line Dancing is scheduled as a Senior Center activity. However, this activity is actually a rehearsal for members of the Coastal Belles. Therefore, in this report, this scheduled activity is counted separately from Senior Center program activities. The frequency per year is displayed in, Tables 5 and 6.
- 3) Overall, there are very few scheduled group activities that enhance fellowship and group cooperation – key ingredients to an effective wellness program.
- 4) As demonstrated in Appendix C, in CY 2017, during 117 days of the total that the Senior Center was opened, no activities or events were scheduled. On these days, seniors were limited to unstructured, free-time activities. As further demonstrated in Tables 3 through 6, of the remaining days opened, 38 days were schedule for group activities, and 78 days were scheduled for line dancing – an activity that most seniors that routinely engage in morning activities do not participate.

- 5) In summary, during CY 2017, 50% of available Senior Center days, no programs were scheduled. Program scheduling was more robust and effective in CY 2014, CY 2015, and CY2016.

Table 3 Scheduled Program Activities – CY 2014-2017

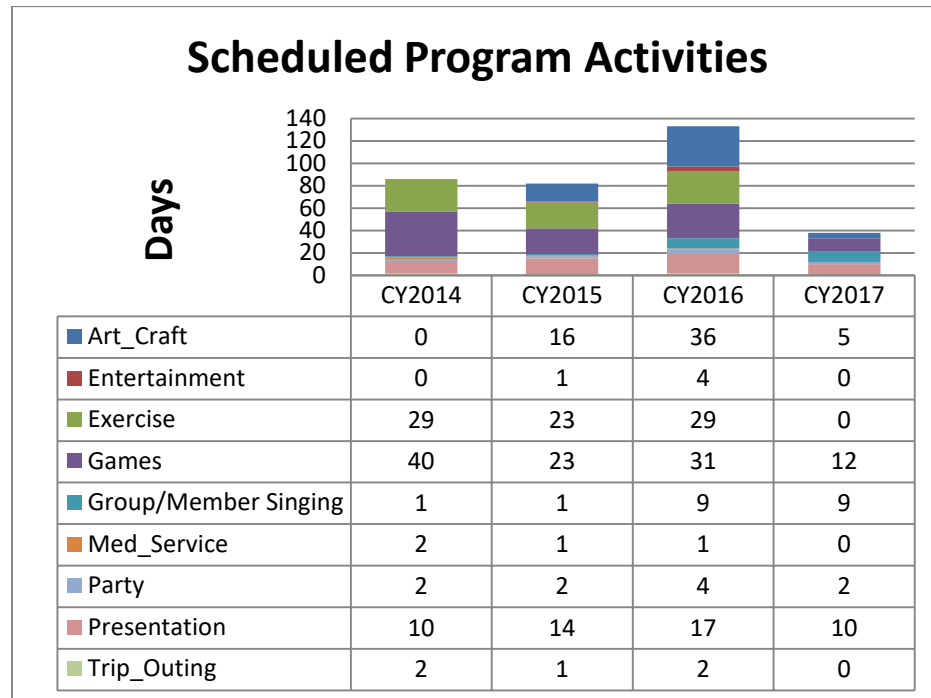
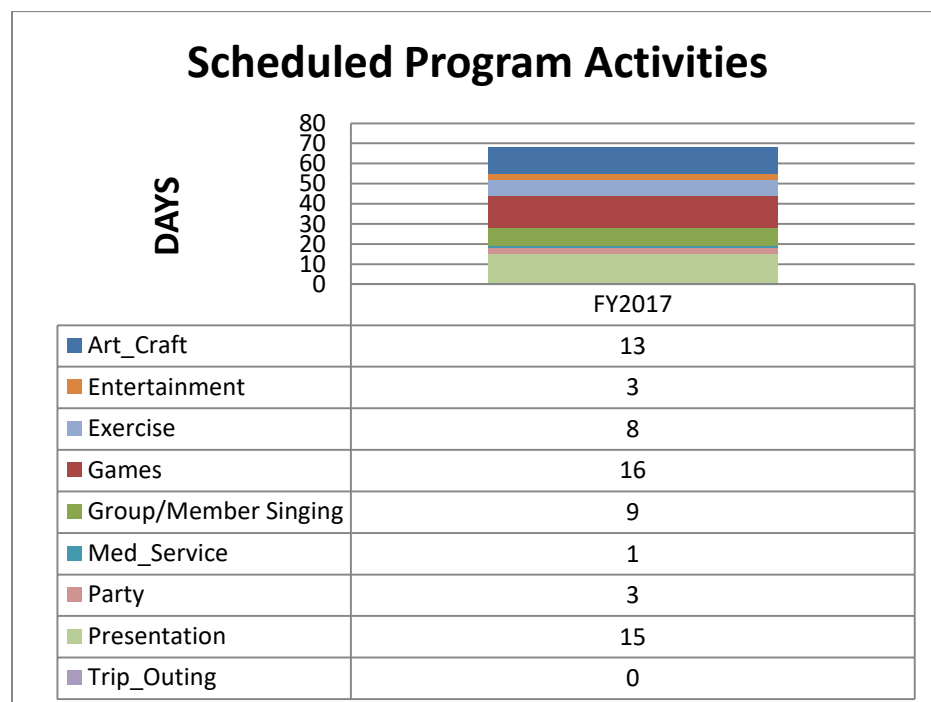


Table 4 Scheduled Program Activities – FY 2017



Note: During CY 2014 and 2015, Line Dancing rehearsals were scheduled once each week in the morning and afternoon. Starting in CY 2016, rehearsals are scheduled twice each week in the afternoon.

Table 5 Line Dancing - CY 2014-2017

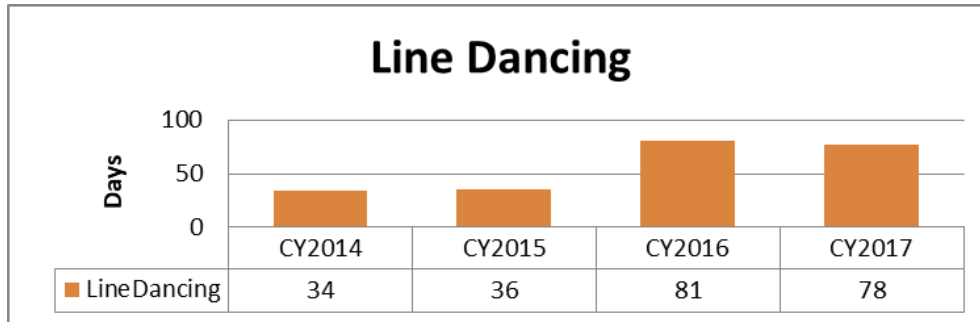
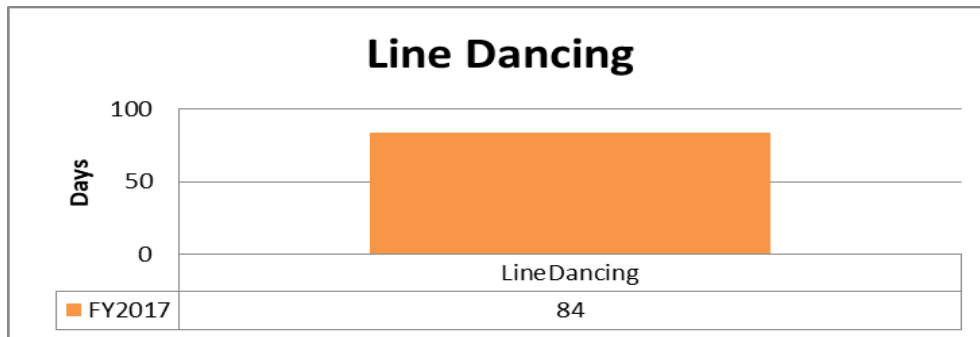


Table 6 Line Dancing - FY 2017



Appendix I – Records, Forms, and Documents

Senior Center online information-designated pages are not maintained current. Paper forms and records used for daily and end of period reports are labor intensive and time consuming. In addition, handwritten entries by staff and participating seniors make some records difficult to audit and verify accuracy. Often, staff relies on recollection rather than record entries to account for activity levels and resource utilization. With the absence of record automation, trend analysis and other management insights are not developed to help staff determine program and service effectiveness and the need for program and service improvements and changes.

- 1) The Center's sign-in record is a one-week paper record that contains a list of 200+ names adjacent to (M-F) check-in boxes. As a sign-in alternative for seniors, this list is also followed by a blank section for signatures. The blank section does not provide a format to indicate the day(s) in attendance. Due to varied compliance and methods used by seniors to sign in, the records are not auditable. Summary (end of week) reports are often a product of staff end-of-week counting and recollection. This same record, with its varying compliance and counting methods, is often used to determine the numbers of meals served. Part time staff also report using other methods to account for meals served – such as counting plates washed. Stated methods, techniques, and routines appear to depend on the individual performing the task, and actual practices have varied over time.
- 2) Bus-rider records are paper records maintained by the driver. The records vary in legibility and completeness. However, they are sufficient for audit.
- 3) Among City published online information, City official documents, and Senior Center desk guides there are inconsistencies that complicate compliance and enforcement. For example:
 - a) Eligible Seniors:
 - i) City Policy: "The Senior Center is open to senior citizens 55 years of age or older who live in St. Marys"
 - ii) Senior Center staff desk guide: "Be sure to remember this center is for everyone however, there are certain rules that must be stressed"
 - iii) Practice: Seniors that live within and outside the City of St. Marys are welcomed to participate in scheduled programs and activities
 - b) Hours Open:
 - i) Policy: "Senior Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Monday – Friday)"
 - ii) City Website: "Senior Center is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Monday – Friday)"
 - iii) Practice: Senior Center staff personnel are scheduled to arrive at 8 a.m. and are scheduled to depart at 4 p.m. Seniors who regularly attend usually arrive after 9 a.m. and are asked to depart between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. (Monday – Thursday). Friday, the Senior Center closes by 11:30 a.m. when seniors go home or choose to go to a designated no-host lunch location.
 - c) Elderly Nutrition Program:
 - i) Policy: "Reservations for lunch must be made 24 hours in Advance ...Regular patrons need only call to cancel the lunch."
 - ii) City Website: "If you plan on attending lunch, please call a day in advance so that enough meals can be ordered for the following day."

- iii) Senior Center desk guide: “Make sure enough meals would be ordered for next day’s lunch. Ask seniors for head count who will be coming the next day.”
- iv) Practice: No visible or obvious effort is made to routinely adjust meals ordered for the next day. As demonstrated in FY 2017 and subsequent invoices, the routine number of meals ordered is 30 meals ordered for Monday and Wednesday, and 35 meals ordered for Tuesday and Thursday.
- d) Senior Center desk guides that specify duties, responsibilities, and procedures to be performed by staff are not always performed or completed as assigned. For example:
 - i) “Be sure and list the amount of people coming in every day. (Please make sure everyone signs in.)”. Based on discussions and observations, the center’s staff does not list (count) the number of people coming in on a daily basis. This assignment usually ends up being an end-of-week task that requires staff interpretation of hand-written records and staff recollection.
 - ii) “List amount of meals served (in black book on desk)”. This task is not recorded daily. Various explanations have been given on how this accounting task is completed daily and / or weekly.
- 4) Online and forecast information shortfalls:
 - a) Senior Center online “Documents” page in the City of St. Marys website is blank. Applicable bylaws, policies, and procedures are not available on line to the public.
 - b) Senior Center online “Calendar” page has an inconsistent record of use and accuracy. No online calendar entries have been made since January 2017.
 - c) Monthly program calendars are currently hand written and only the current month’s calendar is posted, and only inside the Senior Center facility.
 - d) Recently, Senior Center staff has started to post the current week’s lunch menu, but only in the Senior Center facility.

Appendix J – Record Keeping and Marketing Solutions

- 1) Based on interviews, discussions, and observations, trend analysis and other management activities to determine performance levels are rarely if ever performed due to the significant time and labor required to assemble data in a meaningful way. Computer based applications used to record and assemble projections, participation, and performance information can provide daily labor savings, improve accuracy of records, and facilitate staff awareness of program success and failure conditions and trends.
- 2) The Senior Center would be well served if it automated its forms and records.
 - a) Off the shelf software packages are available to facilitate automating the full scope of necessary record keeping. This includes and is not limited to senior participant sign-in and sign-out records; staff maintained records that account for program participation, meals requested, meal servings ordered and served, donations, and incidentals.
 - b) Also available for consideration and demonstration are personalized, flexible, and responsive recordkeeping forms and tools that can be developed using Microsoft® Office software. Figure 1 represents a tool in Excel format using simple dropdown options that could be used by seniors and staff alike. Figure 2 represents daily and weekly records, linked to basic record logs that automatically total activities recorded. An added advantage of engaging seniors in utilizing automated record systems and tools is the addition of *Intellectual Wellness* into the daily activity.

Figure 1 Sign-in and Sign-out Log (Example)

St. Marys Senior Center	New Entry For Each Day	July 2017 - June 2018	Yes	FY 2018	Select NAME, DATE, and TIME from each column cell dropdown list.	
Sign In & Sign Out Record	4/5/2018		No	1:20 PM		
Name	Date	Time In	Lunch	Time Out	Member Comments, Recommendations, and Notes	hrs:min
Another Name	Monday, February 19, 2018	10:37 AM	Yes	11:23 AM		0:46
My Demonstration	Friday, February 23, 2018	9:56 AM	Yes	11:23 AM		1:26
New Name	Monday, March 12, 2018	9:18 PM	No	11:18 PM	Before it gets hot, I would like a trip to the Zoo	1:59
Another Name	Monday, March 12, 2018	11:18 PM	No	11:18 PM		0:00
One_More Name	Wednesday, March 14, 2018	8:09 AM	Yes	3:08 PM	Please add fresh fruit to lunch menu	6:59
New Name	Wednesday, March 14, 2018	8:12 AM	Yes	3:09 PM	Great Lunch	6:56
My Demonstration	Thursday, April 5, 2018	11:27 AM	Yes	1:18 PM		1:51



Figure 2 Daily and Weekly Summary Records (Example)

HISTORY	ATTENDANCE	LUNCH	BUS	
Day	Daily	Daily2	To SC	Fm SC
Monday, January 1, 2018	0	0	0	0
Tuesday, January 2, 2018	0	0	0	0
Wednesday, January 3, 2018	0	0	0	0
Thursday, January 4, 2018	0	0	0	0
Friday, January 5, 2018	0	0	0	0

History	ATTENDANCE	LUNCH	BUS	
Week of	Week of	Week of	To SC	Fm SC
Monday, January 1, 2018	0	0	0	0
Monday, January 8, 2018	0	0	0	0
Monday, January 15, 2018	0	0	0	0
Monday, January 22, 2018	0	0	0	0
Monday, January 29, 2018	0	0	0	0

Also, for staff, a computer based calendar can save time to assemble, print and post. This same calendar can be uploaded to the St. Marys website at the existing link in the Senior Center tab; plus can easily be included in Facebook, and broadcast emails – similar to existing broadcast email notifications provided by other City staff. An example is displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Month's Activity Schedule (Example)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	CONTACT INFORMATION 1-912-673-6075 St. Marys Senior Center		1 9:00am Buses Arrive 9:30am Opening 9:45am Clothes Pin Drop/ Mary 11:30am LUNCH 12:30pm Play Cards, Quilting, Movies, Time 1:30pm Buses Pickup	2 9:00am Buses Arrive 9:30am Opening 9:45am Pokeno/ Grace 11:30am LUNCH 12:00pm Play Cards, Quilting, Movies, Time 12:30pm Buses Pickup
THIS MONTH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH! MARCH 24 TH IS DIABETES ALERT DAY!				
5 9:00am Buses Arrive 9:30am Opening 9:45am Egg Race/Marc 11:30am LUNCH 12:30pm Play Cards, Quilting, Movies, Time 1:30pm Buses Pickup	6 9:00am Buses Arrive 9:30am Opening 9:45am Wellcare Ed. 10:30am Stack Cups/ Ralph 11:30am LUNCH 12:30pm Play Cards, Quilting, Movies, Time 1:30pm Buses Pickup	7 9:00am Buses Arrive 9:30am Opening 10:00am Exercise 10:30am Bingo 11:30am LUNCH 12:30pm Play Cards, Quilting, Movies, Time 1:30pm Buses Pickup	8 9:00am Buses Arrive 9:30am Opening 9:45am Spin the Bottle 11:30am LUNCH 12:30pm Play Cards, Quilting, Movies, Time 1:30pm Buses Pickup	9 9:00am Buses Arrive 9:30am Opening 9:45am Bingo/ Lillie 11:30am LUNCH 12:00pm Play Cards, Quilting, Movies, Time 12:30pm Buses Pickup Time Changes Sunday

A lunch menu calendar is equally important to facilitate senior and staff awareness and planning. Similar to the program calendar, city-wide communications regarding the daily menus can influence participation and grow senior attendance. An example of the menu format is displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Month's Daily Menu Format (Example)

Date: Month & Day	Monday- 1/1, 1/29, 2/26, 3/26	Tuesday- 1/2, 1/30, 2/27, 3/27	Wednesday- 1/3, 1/31, 2/28, 3/28	Thursday- 1/4, 2/1, 3/1, 3/29	Friday- 1/5, 2/2, 3/2, 3/30
Meat or Alternate (3 oz. cooked/edible portions)	Enchilada Casserole	Smothered Pork Chop	Hamburger on Bun	Oven Baked Chicken with Mushroom Gravy	Lemon Baked Fish
Vegetables: 2 (1/2 cup each)	Toss Salad	Broccoli	Baked Beans	English Peas	Okra & Tomato
	Corn	Winter Squash	Lettuce, Tomato & Onions	Toss Salad	Coleslaw
Bread or Alternate: (1)	Wrap prepared in entree	Brown Rice	WW Bun	Yellow Rice	Grits
Butter or Fort. Marg.: (1 teaspoon)	Salad Dressing	Prepared in entree	Ketchup/Mustard/Mayo	Salad Dressing	Tartar Sauce
1/2 cup Dessert: (1)	Fresh Pear	Fruit cup	Apple Crisp	Pineapple Delight	Fresh Fruit
1/2 Pint Milk - 1% (Optional)	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk
Beverage	Tea	Tea	Tea	Tea	Tea

ANNEX A – Option 1 Details

As noted earlier, the National Council on Aging provides excellent policy and handbook guidelines that cover the full spectrum of services for Senior Centers. The following list highlights those elements the Task Force believes worth noting in this report.

- 1) The lease agreement between the City and the Senior Authority details the responsibilities of each as it relates to the facility. The funding relationship is less clearly defined. It is important to clarify the roles. It is recommended that the City Manager identify a senior staff member to be the single liaison with the Authority Chairman to insure accurate information exchange. All contributions from the Authority for any program must be channeled through the City Finance Department. It is recommended that the city prepare a package of financial requests for the coming year for presentation to the Authority in advance of their budget year. It is recommended that the Authority remain as a landlord and funder and the City manage all aspects of the Senior Center as a department of the city.
- 2) Some elements of change are essential to the success of this revitalization. Specifically,
 - a) Plan and manage a progressive and responsive wellness program that encourages group participation and socialization. Six dimensions of wellness are defined in Table 7.
 - b) Automate records and reports. Prepare and provide periodic cost-benefit analysis.
 - c) Provide a nutritious lunch five days a week (Monday – Friday) with menus posted at least one week in advance.
 - d) Provide for activities that encourage socialization, group participation, and independence – allocating time for daily scheduled and unscheduled (i.e. self-determined) activities.
- 3) Additional elements that could enhance the program are:
 - a) Plan menus and activities that are responsive to the needs and desires of participants.
 - b) Change policy for the Center to remain open during the Christmas/New Year holiday season.
 - c) Adopt an eligibility policy that follows the National and State standards that most senior centers employ, which is to set age requirement to 60 and older. (Current Center members under that age could be grandfathered.)
 - d) Provide opportunities and encourage volunteer support – in the Center and the community.
 - i) Adopt a policy employed by most senior centers that encourages and recruits volunteers to “work” at the center.

- ii) Incorporate into the Center programming options for Center participants to volunteer in civic and charitable endeavors, i.e. tutoring school children, knitting baby booties, volunteering at Salvation Army, etc.
- 4) Regularly use the full spectrum of communications resources to market Center programs. The calendar for all activities should be developed three months in advance and posted at least one month in advance.
- 5) Take full advantage of facility, grounds, and area attributes:
 - a) Inside the facility:
 - i) Increase access and opportunities that encourage physical activities; such as table tennis, bean-bag toss, and low-impact exercises targeted to improve endurance, strength, flexibility and balance.
 - ii) Encourage participant interaction through group education, entertainment, and participant led activities
 - b) On the property grounds:
 - i) Engage methods and tools that minimize natural adverse conditions such as heat and gnats. (Outdoor fans and misters may help.)
 - ii) Increase access and opportunities that encourage outdoor physical activities such as horseshoes, croquet, strolling, gardening, miniature golf, other yard games, and picnics.
 - c) In the area:
 - i) Facilitate access to professionally operated stress-relief and physically engaging activities.
 - ii) Examples of local resources and activities include and are not limited to:
 - (1) Swimming
 - (2) Dancing and dance exercise
 - (3) Camden County Recreation Center (CCRC) Group Fitness (activities) Schedule^{xiv}

Table 7 Six Dimensions of Wellness

Dimension of Wellness	Definition
Emotional	Degree to which one feels positive and enthusiastic about one's self and life
Spiritual	The development of a deep appreciation for the depth and expanse of life and natural forces that exist in the universe
Intellectual	Expanding one's own knowledge and skills while discovering the potential for sharing one's gifts with others
Social	Emphasizes the interdependence of human beings and encourages contribution to one's community and the environment
Physical	Achieved through good nutrition and regular physical activity
Occupational	Recognizes personal satisfaction and enrichment in one's life through work – including and not limited to paid, unpaid, and volunteer activities

REFERENCES & END NOTES

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- ⁱ City of St. Marys Master Plan: <http://www.stmarysga.gov/180110.AdoptedDraft.pdf>
 - ⁱⁱ CRC Commission of Georgia, District 12 Area Agency on Aging: <http://www.crc.ga.gov/departments/aaa/aaa.html>
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia Area Agency on Aging Needs Assessment: <http://www.crc.ga.gov/publications/aaa/2015%20CRC%20Needs%20Assess.pdf>
 - ^{iv} St Marys, Georgia Population, Demographics and stats in 2017, 2018: <https://suburbanstats.org/population/georgia/how-many-people-live-in-st-marys>
 - ^v The Older Population in the United States: <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p25-1140.pdf>
 - ^{vi} Poverty by Age and Gender: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/st.-marys-ga/>
 - ^{vii} Wellness Program: Non-evidence-based programming that supports health and wellness. Wellness activities should help participants increase their well-being through: finding their own unique skills and talents that is both personally meaningful and rewarding, regular physical activity, good eating habits, connecting to one's environment and community, creative, stimulating mental activities, search for meaning and purpose in life, awareness and acceptance of one's feelings, assessment of limitations, ability to cope with stress.
 - ^{viii} Traditional Senior Center: A community focal point where older adults come together for services and activities that reflect their experience and skills, respond to their diverse needs and interests, enhance their dignity, support their independence, and encourage their involvement in and with the center and the community
 - ^{ix} Resume – County Public Service Authority (PSA) William Brunson, Executive Director: <http://camdencountyga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7519>
 - ^x Senior Center – 120 Davis Street – Camden County Tax record: <https://qpublic.schneidercorp.com/Application.aspx?AppID=641&LayerID=11309&PageTypeID=4&PageID=4644&Q=1599339095&KeyValue=135+++048>
 - ^{xi} National Council on Aging: <https://www.ncoa.org/>
 - ^{xii} City of St. Marys Annual Budgets: http://www.stmarysga.gov/department/finance/document_center.php
 - ^{xiii} District 12 Area Agency on Aging: <https://www.aginganddisabilitygahelp.org/>
 - ^{xiv} CCRC Group Fitness Schedule: <http://www.camdencountypsa.info/downloads/Jan%202018%20Sched.pdf>